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## Educational Tourism and Forest Conservation: Diversification for Child Education

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### Abstract

The aim of the study is to ensure that school children be familiar with the forest conservation and provide the information about the nature and the need for biodiversity action. The study emphasizes on the relationship between educational tourism and forest conservation. Implementation of educational tourism to the society can be successfully achieved by lifelong learning, where special target groups are school children. The result of the study reveals that teachers, local government and community, tour operators, local and international organizations and overall media can play significant role in this regard.

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**Keywords:** Educational tourism; Forest conservation; Biodiversity; Child education; Diversification.

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### 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest and potential industries in the world today. Investors and business oriented peoples consider the economic and business potentialities of this sector. But tourism has various segmentations such as, natural teaching, environmental consciousness, tool for sustainable development and livelihood, create employment opportunity, social and cultural advancement, etc. So, this sector has been used as a multi-dimensional scope and every portion of the society can benefited from this destination.

Educational tourism is one of the famous sub-types of tourism in the world today. Its popularity and necessity in the tourism market increases day by day. Many countries of the world used educational tourism as their one of the main earning source. The term education tourism refers to any "program in which participants travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience directly related to the location" (Rodger, 1998). It is comprised of several sub-types including ecotourism, heritage tourism, rural/farm tourism, and student exchanges between educational institutions (Paul and Trent). Education tourism include: discover with ecological limits; monitoring to restore declining populations and manage habitat change; tracking the habitats of rare endemic carnivores; measuring the impact of public health education and clinical testing of intestinal parasites of remote

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villages; surveying traditional herbalists to preserve indigenous knowledge; finding the connection between global warming and termites (Earth watch, 1999).

Educational tourism depends on some segmentation such as; demographic, socio-economic, geographic and psychographic. This tourism is not occurring for the all people in the same way. It depends on some demographic elements- age, sex, origin, occupation, income level, educational background, and religious. Socio-economic condition of an area also influence on the implementation of educational tourism. Socio-economic conditions of people are not same in an area. Geographic and psychographic segmentations are most considering factor for educational tourism, due to their strong influencing manner. Some geographic elements are- origins, distance from sites and modes of transport, types of visitors. Look for adventures; actively seeking environmentally sensitive products and service are some psychographic elements in this regard.

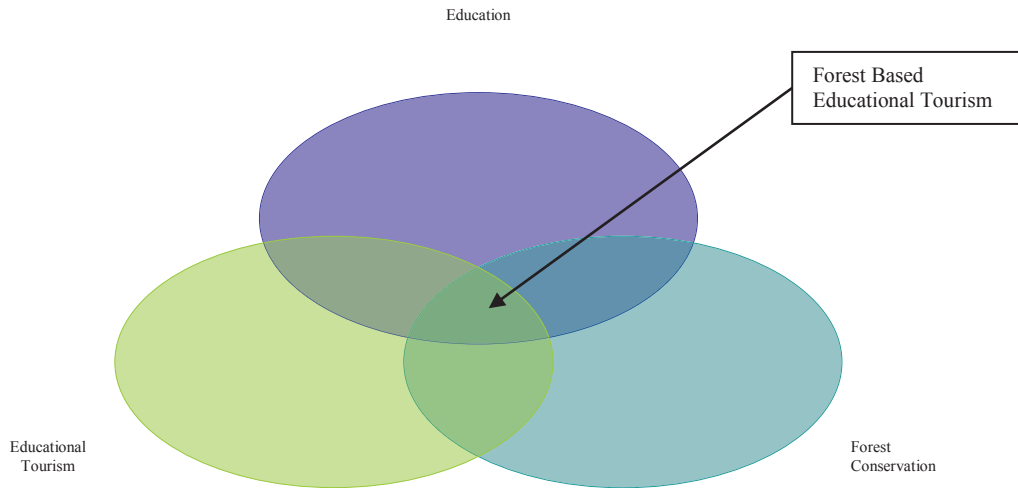
According to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the segment of nature tourism includes activities based on “the natural attractions of an area”. Examples include bird-watching, photography, hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, visiting parks and forest areas (Jim Lee, 2007). Educational tourism deals with the conciseness and awareness components of tourism. Nature-based tourism, especially forest tourism is one of the important forms of educational tourism. The forests are includes natural eco-systems, diversification of the local floral and fauna, natural conservation. Forests areas covered by cultivated fields, meadows, pastures, recreational and other types reserves. Forests are used with the aim of achieving ecological stability and semi-natural eco-systems maintained by human intervention. Life conditions of animals and plants in the forest areas are much differentiated causing diversification of the local flora and fauna. Vascular plants, moss, liverworts, lichens, algae, fungi, birds, and fishes are educational elements in the forest. Natural conservation of the forest site helps to understand the eco-system in the area. Biodiversity of forest area reflects in widely on environmental aspects along the climate and geographical differences. All of these are components of educational tourism and give an idea on natural attraction.

Educational tourism is a useful learning system for the society. It can be successfully achieved by lifelong learning where special target groups are school children. School tenure is the early stage of life. The school children can continue their whole life learning on natural attractions and forest conservation by their active involvement in school life. They can achieve practical and theoretical experience in this stage. So this period is important for educational tourism. The present study gives emphasize on the relationship between educational tourism and forest conservation. Present study examines the potentiality and implement of forest based educational tourism in the diversification of child education.

## **2. Educational Tourism and Forest Conservation**

### *2.1 Relationship between educational tourism and forest conservation*

Educational tourism is delivered through an educational program and seeks to change the learner’s cognitive, participatory knowledge, skills and behavior. Through educational tourism, the visitors travel to a location engaging learning experience directly related to tourism. This tourism is a component of human lifelong education. Again, forest conservation is also a useful part of education system. Geological aspects, biodiversity, wildlife, mangroves, reef, food circle, ecology are including in the natural conservation of forest area. It gives us a complete idea about forest diversity as well as natural environmental aspects. So, the main target of forest based educational tourism ensure understand and gather experience regarding the forest conservation with fulfill the educational requirements.



**Figure 1. Forest based Educational Tourism**

## 2.2 Potentiality of forest based educational tourism in the diversification of child education

Child stage is very important for life. Lifelong learning has started from this stage. The whole life learning also depends on this period. Education about conservation has a strong influence on the extent to which student become committed to arguments for conserving species and habitats (Tim Caro, 2003). This depends on the successful implementation of educational program. Educational tourism ensures this type education system. So, awareness and education regarding forest conservation have been successfully implemented by educational tourism in child level. There are some reasons of including forest conservation in child education;

- The environmental awareness regarding forest area will underpin the implementation of the education plan.
- The forest based educational tourism will be to inform and entertain, and to ensure that school children are familiar with the forest resources.
- Disseminate information regarding the forest ecology to the children, the flora and fauna especially those related to native, endemic and endangered species.
- Learning about conservation would make students more sympathetic to the awareness of environment.
- To promote the development of the nation and of individual citizens.
- Learn about and engage the children with environmental issues in their communities and within wider national discussion.
- To discuss the environmental concerns are helpful to understand the national and international environmental legislation.

## 2.3 Necessity of Educational Tourism for Children

Familiar with forest conservation: Conservation education can be used as an effective means to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a way that gives people extended direct experience (Hiromi Kobori, 2009). Educational tourism in the forest areas can familiar the children with forest conservation. They can able to achieve the actual knowledge regarding the forest by this way. Information about nature and biodiversity action: Through educational tourism activities, children have a chance to appreciate the value of biodiversity, which helps strengthen

forest conservation efforts, and promote to gather sustainable knowledge on natural resources. Sustainable use of ecosystem: Educational tourism helps the children to understand the effects of human activities on species, communities, and ecosystems. It develops their practical interdisciplinary approaches to protect and restore diversity, which enhances the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems.

## 2.4 Implementation of Educational Tourism for Children

The child education diversification of forest conservation depends on proper implementation of educational tourism. There are some ways of implementation the educational tourism are as below:

**Planning team:** It will be important to have a planning team of excellent communicators who can take the environmental awareness and education program forward. They can work together for a conservation awareness plan of action, with short and long-term targets and a budget estimate.

**Develop educational materials:** Information of forest conservation needs to be presented in various formats to ensure that it is relevant for the children. Useful materials include brochures, posters, maps, comic books, wildlife guides, videos, slide shows and interactive displays.

**Exhibition and visiting activities:** Traveling exhibition may be arranged to foster the educational tourism. Some events such as video, film show, quizzes and other competitions can be include in this exhibition. Necessary and relevant government offices and institutions also visit in this regard.

**Local community involvement:** One of the most important techniques is involvement of local people to implement educational tourism. They can influence the children to gather information and build their awareness to forest conservation.

**Tour operator activities:** Tour operator can arrange special tour package for children on forest conservation. They can involve the local people for proper implementation of this program. Open discussion meeting, workshop and field trips can be arranged in this regard.

**Media:** There is high public awareness of educational tourism; the national media can play an effective role. Newspapers, television and radio broadcasts are developing particularly strong public support for conservation education.

**School curriculum:** Schools can develop special course and curriculum for the students, which can improve their knowledge regarding forest conservation.

**Teacher:** Teachers are also helping the children to achieve and foster their awareness to nature and conservation by their teaching and classroom activities.

**Local and international organization:** Local and international organization have a strong role for implementing educational tourism. They can support the conservation education by their wide range education programs and projects. Educational tourism can focus the various environmental and conservation issues of forest to the children. Successful implementation of educational tourism depends on some matter of environmental aspects. These are:

**Nature protection:** There have been increasing attempts to protect local species, flora fauna of forest and these fragile ecosystems. So implement environment and biodiversity related policies and activities for nature protection.

**Preservation of biodiversity:** Biodiversity development is a key element for environment conservation of present and future generations. Major international organization have stressed the importance of conservation and suitable use of biodiversity.

**Level of ecological awareness:** The sustainability of conservation and diversity efforts depends on public awareness. If much people give emphasize to achieve ecological awareness of nature, the children get benefit from it.

### 3. Conclusion

Forest based educational tourism is one of the potential way for the diversification of child education. Large international organizations such as World Wildlife Fund and The Nature Conservancy have given emphasize in this learning system. In her study of environmental awareness and action by primary school pupils and their parents, Rovira (2000) concluded that some of the differences were socially based, drawing distinctions between working class families and those with higher education and more professional careers. This is a difficulty to promote educational tourism in child level. There are some problem arise in the implementaion of eductional tourism such as, limited financial resources and technological supports, lack of skilled personnel to facilitate the tourism instruction delivery, lack of awarenee towards forest conservation, inadequate matirals for this education. So, adequate financial allocation, technical and educational material support, expert tourism professional and overall conservation awareness of people are essential for implementing educational tourism. By this we can ensure proper child education which may be fruitful for creating prospective citizen of a nation.

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